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EPISTLE

Containing Wholesome

Advice *and* Councel

TO ALL

FRIENDS,

Grounded upon Antient Examples, Recorded in the Scriptures of Truth.

Written by *William Edmondson.*

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Let your Converſation be without Covetouſneſs; and be content with ſuch things as ye have: for he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee. Heb. 13. 5.

But as he which hath called you is Holy, ſo be ye Holy in all manner of Converſation. 1 Pet. 1. 15.

Lord, my Heart is not haughty, nor mine Eyes lofty: neither do I exerciſe my ſelf in great matters, or in things too high for me. Pſal. 131. 1.

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EPISTLE

Containing Wholesome

Advice and Counsel

TO A LL

FRIENDS

BRITISH MUSEUM

FRIENDS,

TAke heed how you ſlight and reject *Reproofs of Inſtruction*, which are *the way of Life*, and to preſerve from *the Chambers of Death*, Exampled from our firſt Parents; for if they had obeyed the *Lords Inſtructions*, they had not fallen in the Chambers of Death, and loſt the happy Eſtate they were ſet in, when God created them in his own Image; therefore be careful to obſerve the Lords *Reproofs* and *Inſtructions*, which you have plenty of, on every Occaſion, leſt you loſe the Life that is hid in Chriſt, and the Image of the heavenly Man that is to be renewed in you. *Example*, If *Cain* had obſerved the Lords *Reproof* of *Inſtruction*, he had not been drove from the Lords preſence, and made a Fugitive and a Vagabond in the Earth, and therefore take heed how you reject good Advice and Counſel, leaſt the Lord turn you from his preſence, as the Wandring Stars, re-

ſerved for blackneſs of Darkneſs. *Example*, The old World, before the Flood, was Inſtructed and Reproved by *Noah*, that juſt Man that walked with God, a Preacher of Righteouſneſs; *And the Lord ſaid my Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man* that is but Fleſh, which was long ſtriving with them, but they would not Reform their ways, but Eat and Drunk, Married and gave in Marriage, till the day that *Noah* Entred into the Ark, and the Flood came and Swept them all away: And our Saviour ſaith, *thus ſhall it be in the Day of his coming*, and Inſtructs all to watch; Therefore be Inſtructed, and fear the Lord God, and receive his Counſel to guide, limit and bound you in Eating, Drinking, Buying, Selling, Marrying and giving in Marriage, that whether ye Eat or Drink, or what ever elſe ye do it may be done to God's Glory, leaſt the Lord come at an hour that you look not for, whoſe Reward is according to your Deeds. *Example*, The Lords antient People the Jews, when the Lord brought them out of *Egypt*, with a high hand

hand, and they ſaw his Wonders and great Deliverance, Proviſions and Miracles in the Wilderneſs, and did not prize the Lords Mercies, nor hearken to his Reproofs of Inſtruction, but provoked the Lord to anger, in going after the inclinations of their own evil hearts, and their Carcaſes fell in the Wilderneſs, and is written for your Inſtruction, and their Puniſhment for our Example, that we do not Provoke and Tempt God, nor look back into the World, and luſt after the things thereof, but know the Lords Bounds and Limits, and keep within it, in Submiſſion to his will, leaſt any fall ſhort of a better Lot than theirs in the Land of *Canaan*; even an Inheritance in the Heavens that will never fade away. *Example*, The Lord ſaith to *Judah* & *Iſrael* by way of Reproof and Inſtruction; *I Planted a Vineyard with a choice Vine in a fruitful Hill, & gathered out the Stones, and hedged and walled it about, and built a Tower in the midſt thereof; and ſettled a Wine-Preſs therein, and when I looked for Grapes it brought forth wild*

Grapes; and what is it I could have done to my Vineyard that I have not done? Therefore I will tread down the Hedge, and break down the Wall, and it ſhall not be digged nor pruned, and I will Command the Clouds they ſhall not rain upon it—— Now are not you cloſely concerned in this? did not the Lord gather and plant you his People, and plant his Truth in your Inward parts, and write his Law in your Hearts, and planted you into his fruitful Hill, the Ground and Foundation of the Prophets, and Apoſtles, and Faith that was once delivered to the Saints, and walled you about with his Salvation, and Hedged you about with ſuch as he hath appointed and raiſed up in defence of the glorious Goſpel both in Doctrine and Diſcipline, and placed his Name as a Tower in the midſt of you, and a Wine-Preſs therein, and watered you with Springs of Life, and with the former and latter Rain in its Seaſon, through his heavenly Clouds that he fills with the Myſteries of Faith, and Goſpel of his Kingdom, and hath raiſed

up

up Inſtruments to dig about you that you might live looſe to the Earth and to the World, and your Hearts and Affections might be ſet on Things that are above, where Chriſt is; and your minds on heavenly things more than earthly? and ordered his Pruners to their Service, that Superfluity and Naughtineſs grow not up, which always hurt the Lords Vineyard: That as Trees of Righteouſneſs of the Lords planting, you might bring forth fruits of Holyneſs thro' the dayly Croſs of Chriſt and ſelf denyal to the Praiſe and Glory of God, and be the Ground that receives a bleſſing from God: Now the ground that Receives of the ſame Mercies and brings forth Briers and Thorns which are the *Cares* of the world *Covetouſneſs* of Riches, *Pride*, Love of *Greatneſs*, eager and inſatiable deſires after the *Profits*, *Fulneſs* and *Finery* of the World, with the Liberty & *Pleaſures* therein which the earthly Eye goes after and that mind affects, adding *Trade* to *Trade*, *Farm* to *Farm*, *Purchaſe* to *Purchaſe*, *Field* to *Field*, and *Houſe* to

Houſe; which are as the wild Grapes, and Fruits of the Earth which are to be caſt into the Wine-Preſs of the wrath of God, trodden without the City new *Jeruſalem*, and as ſuch wild Grapes provoked the Lord in the days of old to lay his Vineyard waſte, & to let in the wild Beaſts of the Forreſt to root it up; therefore hear and receive Inſtruction and Reproof in Time; before it be too late: And again the Lord reproves his people for the Sins of *Sodom*, *Pride*, *Fulneſs* of *Bread* and abundance of *Idleneſs* was in her, & in her Daughters, and they were haughty, & committed Abominations (before me ſaith the Lord) therefore I took them away as I ſaw good.

Now here is a Warning and Inſtruction to you that Lives in fulneſs in this plenteous Land; and are Fine and Idle, with your Daughters full fed, Nurſes without real neceſſity, alſo idle dry Nurſes, who help to Train and Nurſe up your Children in Finery, Pride and Idleneſs; and as they grow in Years, grows high and haughty, will not theſe things Provoke the Lord to take ſuch away

as

as he ſees good: And again the Lord ſaith to the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *They come to thee as my people cometh, and they ſit before thee as my people, and hears thy words but they will not do them; for with their Mouth they ſhew much Love, but their hearts goes after their Covetouſneſs, and they Love to hear thy words but doe them not; yet they ſhall know when the Lords Judgements comes that a Prophet hath been amongſt them*: And ſo ſhall all ſuch comers to our Religious Meetings, who Loves to hear the Word of God preach'd but will not do it. *Example*: *Jeruſalem* was often Reproved and Inſtructed by the Lords Meſſengers, but they rejected, and ſaid to the Seers ſee not, and to the Prophets, Propheſie ſmooth things; Propheſie not unto us right things. And this Iniquity was to them as a breach ready to fall, ſwelling out of a high wall, whoſe breach cometh ſuddenly at an inſtant: *Therefore* take heed how you ſlight the Lords Reproofs of Inſtruction; and Spurn and fret againſt the Lords Seers and Servants, leaſt ſuch a breach come

ſuddenly

ſuddenly upon you which you think not of; and then you ſay with Lamentation, how have we deſpiſed the Reproofs of Inſtruction, *in the day when we might have known the things that belonged to our peace, but now they are hid from our Eyes,*

And again, the Lord ſaith —— The *Daughters of* Zion *are haughty, walking with ſtretched-out Necks and wanton Eyes; walking and mincing* as they go, (or triping nicely) *therefore the Lord will ſmite with a Scab, the Crown of the head of the Daughters of Sion, and the Lord will diſcover their ſecret parts, and take away the bravery of their Ornaments, their Cauls* (or Net Works) *and round Tires, their Chains and Bracelets, Mufflers, Bonnets, Ornaments and Head-Bands, Tablets & Ear-Rings, Rings & Noſe Jewels, the Changeable ſuits of Apparel, and their Mantles, Wimples and Criſping-pins, their Glaſſes, and fine Linnen; Hoods and Vails. And it ſhall come to paſs that inſtead of ſweet ſmell, there ſhall be a ſtench; and inſtead of a Girdle a Rent, and inſtead of well ſet Hair baldneſs;*

and

and instead of a Stomacher a girding with Sackcloath, and burning instead of Beauty: Her Pride and high mindedness got a great fall; and therefore let haughty, fine, Nice Dames be warned and instructed by it, that in their gates sets themselves in their Nice Postures and Gestures; and trips nicely, mincing their Steps, with their white Shoes and fine Boxes; fine white Aprons, and fine Mantles, and fine great Hoods of several sorts, and fine curious Linnen; and great Looking Glasses to look into to see themselves and finery from head to foot, with changeable costly suits of Apparel, and fine Stomachers; with fine Hangings, and fine Furniture in your fine Rooms, Children fine; Boys with their Bonnets, and Velvet Picked Caps with Ribbons; And Girles with white Shoes and Boxes & fine Mantles, with many other fine Toys equivalent, more for Pride than Service; which careless Women that lives at ease in their pleasures and delights, examples and trains their Children up in; which destroys the innocent part in Children, and Nurses

that part that is earthly, and makes them haughty. Now concerning ſuch eaſy careleſs Women, the Lord ſaith: *Riſe up ye women that are at eaſe, hear my Voice ye Careleſs Daughters, give Ear unto my Speech, many days and years ſhall ye be troubled, ye careleſs women tremble ye women that are at eaſe, be troubled ye careleſs ones; Strip ye and make ye bare, and gird Sackcloath upon your Loins.* Iſaiah 32: 9, 10, 11. Now theſe things are writen for our inſtruction, and the Puniſhment is Exemplary.

Now holy Women that truſted in God, their Adorning was not fine Dreſſes and coſtly Attire; Nor mincing, nor high mindedneſs, but the Ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which is of great price with the Lord: and reverenced their Husbands, and had a godly Care of their Children, for their preſervation and to fit them for the Lord; As *Sarah*, *Rebecka* & *Hannah*; and we do not read that they had their Nurſes, & Dry-Nurſes, but *Hannah* gave her Son *Samuell* Suck; and when ſhe had weaned

weaned him offered him to the Lord, from whom ſhe received him; and we do not read ſhe brought him fine Things to make him fine and proud, but ſhe brought him a little Coat every Year; and *Moſes*'s Mother nurſed him for *Pharaoh's* Daughter; and we do not read that *Elizabeth* the Mother of *John Baptiſt*, and *Mary* the Mother of our Saviour had their Nurſes, and theſe were Noted Women, and Examples to all that came after them, and truſts in God, and profeſſes Godlineſs, with Faith and good works, which you now profeſs, and by which you are their Daughters, ſo long as you follow their footſteps, and no further.

And my Friends, have a due Conſideration of a great Liberty that is taken, and given to Daughters, and young Women riding abroad with their eaſy Horſes, fine Furniture and Dreſſes, too, often more for Pleaſure then either profit or Credit; *Dinah*, the Daughter of *Jacob* may Inſtruct you, and many other Examples. So let not natural Affection, nor looſe Examples over-

rule

rule your Underſtandings, and your Authority, but let the Lords wiſdom rule in all your hearts, that in his Authority you may rule and limit ſuch youthful Pleaſures, and the many Warnings of the Lord may be anſwered, to the Benefit of you and yours. And we have many Inſtructions and Cautions, to take heed and beware of preſſing after the things of this World, adding Houſe to Houſe, and Field to Field, to make our ſelves, and Poſterity great in the Earth, which the Lord pronounces a Woe againſt; *and they that will be Rich fall into Temptations, and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown men in Deſtruction and Perdition, which while ſome followed after they erred from the Faith, and pierced themſelves through many Sorrows. And it is hard for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God*, and no man can pleaſe Chriſt our Captain, that loads himſelf with the affairs of this world, ſo having food and Raiment be content, and here a little will ſerve: for as we brought nothing into the

World,

World, we are ſure to take nothing out of the world. Now thoſe who reject Inſtructions, they reject there own Mercies; as *Balaam* did that Loved Riches and greatneſs, and Tempted God: And as *Achan* did who through Covetouſneſs took of the forbidden things; And as King *Saul*, who ſaved the beſt Oxen and Sheep of the ſpoil of *Amaleck*, and loſt his Kingdom; And as *Demas* that Imbraced the preſent World; And as *Ananias* and *Saphira* that Diſſembled with God; And as the young Man that came to our Saviour for Inſtruction what good Thing he ſhould do to get Eternal Life; and when his Inſtruction touched his great poſſeſſions, he was ſorrowful and went his way.

Now as here are Inſtructions, ſo likewiſe we have here Examples of Puniſhments uopn Offenders, where the Reproofs of Inſtruction were diſregarded; & now the Lord hath called us to be his People, and made us partakers of his heavenly divine gift according to our Abilities, in which we may ſerve in the

Body,

Body, in the place and ſervice that the Lord hath allotted to us, for the God of order brings all things into order, and all are to receive Inſtructions, and know their places and ſervices, that there be no Diſorder or Schiſm in the Body, of which *Chriſt Jeſus* is the Head; for he is raiſing up Ruines of the Prophets and Apoſtles, Chriſt himſelf being the Foundation, and corner Stone, and all are to keep within their Limits, Bounds and Line; whether Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Paſtors, Teachers, Exhorters, Help-meets in Goverment; all are to know their places Bounds and Line, and keep within it: And take heed of preſuming and inlarging into the Line of others, for that creates Trouble and Fractions in the Body: As in the caſe of *Kore*, *&c.* For both in the time of the Prophets and time of the Apoſtles, *Intruders* that went beyond their Line, and miſſed their way, loſt themſelves, and were Troublers in the Congregation and the Church of Chriſt: And this is as that ſounding Braſs and Tinckling

Tinkling Cymbal, that tickles the Itching Ear, and affectionate part, but reaches not the ſolid witneſs, nor anſwers the ſervice of the Day; ſo is as the Droſs and Tin that muſt be purged out of the Church. So there is a ſervice for Male and Female, in the Church, in this day that Chriſt is repairing the Tabernacle of *David*, and Raiſing up the Ruines thereof, and Reſtoring all things to their Center, where the heavenly Harmony is known and the wiſe hearted and Inſpired may work for God, and their own Salvation; Men their part, and Women their part, by the appointment of the Maſter and wiſe Undertaker, who is reſtoring the Church into her ancient Order; And Women Inſpired with the Teſtimony of Jeſus, may Pray and Propheſy; keeping in the Bounds and Order laid down by the holy Apoſtle; but muſt not teach and uſurp Authority over the Men, but be in Subjection in all Things, for the Man is head of the Woman as Chriſt is head of the Church. Yet there is a ſervice in many Things

for the Women: For in preparing for the Tabernacle of the Old Covenant, the wise hearted Inspired Women wrought as well as the wise hearted Inspired Men, and both had their work allotted to them; and were to work it all according to the Heavenly Pattern. And according to the wisdom of God Women had the easy part, the Needle Work, being the weaker Vessell, and of weaker Capacity, yet help meets in their places with the Men: And now in Repairing the Tabernacle of the New Covenant, and restitution of all Things; Inspired Women hath the easy part of the work alotted them, according to Rule and Instruction laid down in Holy Scripture; the Aged Women to be in Behaviour, as becometh Holiness, and Teachers of Good Things; that they may teach the Younger Women to be Sober, Discreet, Chaste, Keepers at Home, Good, Loving and Obedient to their Husbands, and to love their Children; that the *Word of God* be not blemished. And again, Young

Women may Marry, guide the Houſe, give no Occaſion to the Adverſary to ſpeak Reproachfully: (So here, and in many other things,) there is great ſervice for the Women as Helpmeets, in Adorning of the Goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus, yet the eaſie part ſuitable to their Temper, Capacity and Ability: And there is harder Labour in this Work, as Travelling, Journeys to publiſh the Doctrine of the Kingdom of Chriſt, often attended with hardſhips of divers ſorts, and Sufferings, Perils and Temptations, which the hardy Temper, Capacity and Ability of Men, is fitter to perform, But notwithſtanding that the eaſier part of the Work doth in general belong to the Women, yet ſuch faithful and approved Women, who are truly inſpired and gifted for the ſervice of the Miniſtry, may, as the Lord moves; go forth and Travel in the aforeſaid Service with the Unity of faithful Elders and Brethren: And thus the Divine Wiſdom of God orders Men their part, and Women their part, as Co-workers together with Chriſt, and makes his

Yoke Easie, according to Ability and Gift: For I have known divers Women of the Younger Sort, venturing on such Services in Travelling abroad, which have faltred and failed, and fallen into great Temptations, and hurt themselves and others, and caused the blameless *Truth* to suffer; whereas they might have been preserved and have been serviceable in their day, if they had staid nearer Home under succour, according to the Instructions of the Holy Apostle. And great Occasion hath been and is given by divers Girls that hath some openings in the things of Gods Kingdom, sometimes more properly belonging to their own States and Conditions then to others, and forwardly, if not presumptuously, goes abroad to Preach in long Declarations, leaving their Services and Places, getting into an Equipage of fine Cloathing and other Furniture for Travelling, without a due regard of the Issue, the way being now made Smooth, Easie and Pleasant: And these things under a due consideration hath remained with me, for some con-

siderable

ſiderable time, and now Written for Admonition and Inſtruction, that this great Work of a thorough Reformation may go on, which Chriſt is working, and is now ſearching *Jeruſalem* as with Candles, and turning his Hand, and taking away her Droſs & Tin, that ſhe may be the Beauty of Nations, and the Praiſe of the whole Earth, and the Diſcipline of her Inhabitants may example all the World, all keeping their Ranks and Places, according to Goſpel Rites; Husbands to their Wives, and Wives in due ſubjection to their Husbands; Parents on their Parts to their Children; and Children on their Parts in Obedience and Reverence to their Parents; and Maſters and Miſtreſſes doing to their Servants that which is right; and Servants duly obſerving their Duties and Places in a due Performance; all according to Rules and Inſtructions given by the Holy Apoſtle, which not being kept, hath made Confuſion and Deſtraction: And now the Lord hath brought and is bringing the Church out of the Apoſtacy, into her Antient

Doctrine

Doctrine and Discipline, and hath ordained and is ordaining Elders and Overseers in his Church, who are to take heed to themselves, and the Flock of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost hath made them Overseers, to Feed the Flock of Christ in due season, with that which is found in Faith, Doctrine and Discipline, that the great Lord and Shepherd, who laid down his Life for the Flock may have the Honour, who is Worthy for Ever.

William Edmondson.

The END.

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